



INFANT BOTULISM



Infant botulism, which affects infants under 14 months of age, was first recognized in California in 1976. This type of botulism may be caused by the ingestion of *Clostridium botulinum* spores that colonize and produce toxins in the intestinal tract of infants.

Honey has been indirectly implicated as the source of *C. botulinum* spores in some infant botulism cases. Other non-sterilized foods, as well as non-food items in the infant's environment, may also be sources of spores.

Infant botulism is diagnosed by identifying *C. botulinum* toxins and spores in the infant's stools.

Clinical symptoms of infant botulism start with constipation that occurs after a period of normal development. This is followed by poor feeding, lethargy, weakness, pooled oral secretions, and weak or altered cry. Loss of head control is noticeable.

If such symptoms are noted, your child's physician should be notified immediately.